

SEP 10 1999

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9/3/99

Rich Breitenbach
Cal Fed
1416 9th ST. #1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Breitenbach and Members,

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute my comments regarding the evolving plan for long-term management of California's water. Such opportunity for an ordinary citizen like myself to be heard is a vital counter to the much greater access that certain people have. Although I am an ordinary person, I have been interested in the water issue for some time.

No matter how the storage/conservation mix falls out, water will undeniably be an increasing concern as this state's population continues growing. We have been accustomed to having ample water, but that situation is bound to change. During the last drought we did a lot to address municipal water waste, and we found out that conservation is not all that hard and can have a big effect. But municipal water users account for only a minor percentage of water use in this state. Most of it is used by agriculture. It is a fact that conservation applied to this sector has the potential to save much more water at far less cost than to build storage facilities for that same volume of water. The most cost-effective and efficient way to get people to conserve is to make it costly not to conserve.

We cannot have a system that is realistic, unless agriculture pays for water what it really costs. Of course, these users will scream, and say words intended to strike fear into our hearts, like "increased food prices", "economic ruin", "people put out of work" etc. etc. They say this because they think it will get you to do what is in their best interests. They will in fact pass any increased cost on to the consumer (and I am a consumer, remember). But the benefits will far outweigh the costs. We still pay in any case (subsidize their water or pay higher food prices). I would rather the latter. That gives growers an incentive to lower water cost so as to maximize profits.

We should not countenance any further dams or reservoirs unless every possible conservation measure has been put into place!

Furthermore, projected water needs should be adjusted by the savings these needed conservation measures will bring!

Any future water projects should not be taxpayer-subsidized. We should not replay the mistakes of previous water projects. If you have not read Cadillac Desert, I recommend the chapters on the history of these projects. You should have some familiarity with them. The public was promised that the outlay for those projects would be repaid, but this has never happened, because water-use fees are set so ridiculously low. First, we pay for the system, next, we subsidize wasteful use of water, and lastly, we suffer the effects generally of insufficient water flows on our rivers and streams, and in the Delta. Whole industries have been wiped out as a result of these lowered flows: tourist industries, fishing, lobster, etc. Where is the calculation of these costs in your water calculations?

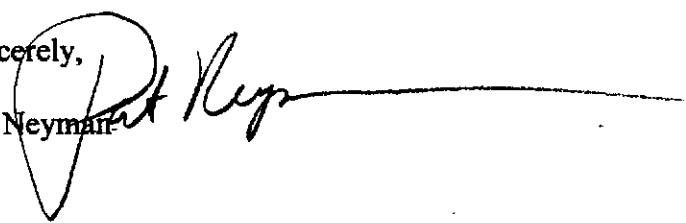
It isn't just people in cities and suburbs, and people growing food that need water, either! Every living thing needs water. Do you think it was put here just for you and me?? I don't think you really believe that in your heart.

The health of our rivers, streams and the Delta is not just a luxury and an incidental item. Aside from the millions of species of plants, animals, insects, and other invertebrates that creation put there, each of which is as much a miracle as human beings are, which is reason enough for us not to greedily usurp so much of the water that they can't survive, these areas also play a vital role in flood control, channeling runoff, slowing down water so it is absorbed by the soil and released more slowly into the river channel.

I wonder what the children of the future will say about our generation. Did we use the resources we inherited with respect and wisdom? So far, I don't think they will look up to us for what we have done. I always have hope, though, or I wouldn't be writing. I have a poster that says "Good planets are hard to find." We only have one planet. It is up to us to take care of that part which has been entrusted to us. If we don't, we have nobody to blame but ourselves.

Sincerely,

Pat Neyman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Neyman", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.